



Policy Brief

On National Policy Action toward Improved Hospital Management and Administration

Meeting of Health Reform Implementation Support Group (HRISG) on February 28, 2014

This policy brief documents results from the implementation of health care reform initiatives and recommends to the Minister of Health actions in the area of human resources management

I. Introduction

In February 2012 the HRISG approved the Enabling Equitable Health Reform (EEHR) Project's proposal to start piloting a set of management and administration improvement interventions in three hospitals – Korca and Lezha regional hospitals and Tirana Maternity Hospital #1. Since then teams from the three hospitals and EEHR have been working to implement various interventions among which are those supporting improved capabilities for managing the hospital human resources.

Lessons learned from the implementation of human resource management improvements support the conclusions that public hospitals, with support from the Ministry of Health, could take quick and decisive steps to improve the management of hospitals' main asset – its staff. Hospitals should follow the technical approach pursued by the EEHR focusing on a set of priority human resource management capabilities related to staff job descriptions, employee performance evaluation, new employee orientation, staff planning, training needs assessment. These and other interventions in the area of human resources were successfully tested with EEHR support at the three pilot hospitals. The pilot hospitals' human resource departments and human resource working groups could serve as a resource for technical guidance, advice, and orientation for other hospitals. A national level group on human resources in health care established by the MOH will be highly instrumental to provide technical and policy direction to human resource development and management in the health care sector.

II. Staff Planning, Training Needs Assessment, New Employee Hiring

Problem Statement: Planning the staff needs at hospital using reference to work loads and other objective criteria is limited and inconsistent at present. Hospital staff is in need of continuous training that is designed and delivered to fulfill an existing and targeted knowledge or skill gap confirmed through a formal training needs assessment process. Such need identification will reduce the mismatch between training needs and training subjects and improve the targeting and effectiveness of training efforts. Hospitals currently have no experience with such assessments. New employee hiring processes need strengthening to ensure that the hospital can hire the best available human resources.

Results of Intervention Implementation: EEHR developed and delivered trainings and practical guides that built or strengthened hospital capabilities for staff planning, training needs assessment and new employee hiring. Results are viewed as positive by the staff and leadership of pilot hospitals.

Recommended Policy Action: Introduce staff planning, training needs assessment, and new employee hiring policies and procedures using as a resource pilot hospitals and their improved capabilities for effective human resource management.

III. New Employee Orientation

Problem Statement: New hospital hires need a good orientation on all key aspects of hospital organization and operations from hospital administration, management and structure to hospital policies, security issues, and fire safety and evacuation. Such orientation is not offered at hospitals in Albania. Introducing such orientations will provide multiple benefits. New employees must become familiar from the first days/ weeks of their work with all key operational aspects of the hospital.

Results of Intervention Implementation: EEHR has been assisting the three pilot hospitals in the introduction of new employee orientations. Employee orientation manuals were developed by groups of hospital employees and EEHR staff. The manuals were pre-tested and current and current employees were the first one to receive orientation. Orientation is mandatory for all new hires now.

Recommended Policy Action: Hospitals should develop new employee orientation manuals, conduct orientations for all existing employees and offer the orientation to all new hires.

IV. Job Descriptions and Employee Performance Evaluations

Problem Statement: Job descriptions for hospital staff are usually very general and do not reflect specifics of the duties of each employee. This leads to various problems such as conflicts due to poor understanding of functions, inefficiencies, and blurring objectivity in the process of employee performance evaluation whose precision is highly dependent on job description specifics for each employee.

Results of Intervention Implementation: EEHR, working with the regional pilot hospitals, has provided training, technical and managerial direction for creating job descriptions that are specific for individual hospital employees. Job descriptions were created collaboratively with the employees and their supervisors. They have been signed by the employee and constitute a part of the official HR record. They serve as a basis for holding the employee accountable in the employee – supervisor relationship and are the basis for employee performance evaluations. Performance evaluation tools were introduced to the three pilot hospitals which used them effectively to complete their staff 2012 evaluation.

Recommended Policy Action: Individualized job descriptions should be made a part of each employee record and should serve as a basis for employee performance evaluation.